Biden Directs $150M in Research Grants to Cancer Moonshot

The Cancer Moonshot funding will support eight research teams developing better methods to surgically remove tumors.

August 14, 2024 By Trent Straube

The Biden-Harris administration announced $150 million in research grants for the Cancer Moonshot initiative. Specifically, the funding will support eight research teams developing innovative ways to better surgically remove tumors.

“For the nearly two million Americans who are newly diagnosed with solid tumor cancers each year, surgical removal is often the first step in their treatment,” notes a White House press release, adding that the funded programs aim “to make these surgeries more effective, reducing the need for repeat surgeries and decreasing the damage to healthy tissue, ultimately saving and extending lives.”

“Currently, it can take days to weeks before a surgeon knows whether all the tumor has been removed, and our goal is to get that down to 10 minutes, while the patient is still on the table,” said J. Quincy Brown, PhD, associate professor of biomedical engineering in the Tulane School of Science and Engineering in a Tulane press release on the Moonshot grants and the school’s research into imaging system for tumors. “If successful, our work would transform cancer surgery as we know it.”

This week, President Joe Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden traveled to New Orleans to announce up to $150 million in...

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The Cancer Moonshoot refers to a series of federal health initiatives Vice President Biden launched in 2016 and that the Biden-Harris administration reignited in 2022 with new actions and commitments. The Moonshot aims to reduce the cancer death rate in the United States by at least half by 2047, prevent more than 4 million cancer deaths and improve the experience of those touched by cancer. As Biden has said, the goal is to end cancer as we know it.

Biden has mostly remained behind the scenes since dropping out of the presidential race. He announced the cancer funding while at Tulane University in New Orleans in a public statement that illustrates how important the Cancer Moonshot is to him and his administration. He lost his son Beau, who served in the Army, to brain cancer in 2015. Six years later, President Biden signed the PACT Act, legislation that expands veterans' access to benefits resulting from their exposure to carcinogens and toxic elements.

The new cancer funding will be awarded through the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. Specifically, the grants will go to teams selected by the Precision Surgical Interventions (PSI) program at ARPA-H. The eight teams are located at:

- Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire,
- Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore,
- Rice University in Houston,
- Tulane University in New Orleans,
- University of California, San Francisco,
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign,
- University of Washington in Seattle and
- Cision Vision in Mountain View California.

To read more about the Cancer Moonshot in Cancer Health, see "Biden's Cancer Moonshot to Boost Access to Patient Navigation Services," "Mary J. Blige's Personal Losses Led Her to Support Biden's Cancer Moonshot" and "Cancer Moonshot Announces New Program to Develop More Precise Cancer Surgery."

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